Luapula Peoples

131 towards the Luapula and, in several respects, markedly differing from the surrounding plateau country.

226 The abundance of fish in the Luapula, which is free from rapids and easily navigable below Johnston Falls near the mouth of the Lunngo, makes fishing an important economic pursuit in which virtually all the adult male population participate and to which are attached elaborate ritual observances. (see below p.94) Besides being an important item in the native diet, fish constitutes the chief trading asset of the country. [458]

134 241 On the plateau, where soils are poorer and the population is almost exclusively dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, the shifting citemene system of cultivation is the rule. In the valley, however, the rich alluvial deposits make possible a semi-permanent mound cultivation; this removes the necessity for changing village sites periodically and results in a greater stability. Cassava, of little account on the plateau, where finger millet and Kaffir corn predominate, is the staple food crop in the valley.

● 186 Common traditions accumulated over two centuries, during which the valley constituted the core of Kazembe's kingdom, have made the population conscious and proud of its past.

611 The patrilineal reckoning of descent introduced and established by the Lunda, as well as their tribal heterogeneity, mark the valley peoples off from the matrilineal and ethnically homogeneous neighbouring tribes: the Shila-Katya (north west), Shila (north), Lungu, Chishinga (east), Mukulo, Aushi (south), Lamba (south-west), and Lomotwa (west).

631 The Kazembe is now Paramount over the western (Northern Rhodesia) side of the valley, ruling directly in the province surrounding his capital. His kingdom is divided into eight chiefdoms, ruled by the following chiefs (from Lake Mweru southward): Kambwali, Kanyembo, Kazembe himself, Lukwesa, Lubunda, Kashiba, Mulundu, and Katuta. Sub-chiefs Mwyombe and Kapesa administer two districts carved out of the metropolitan chiefdom but cannot hold courts. Lubunda, Mulundu, Katuta and Kapesa are of Chishinga extraction, the others are Lunda.

Kilwa island, with its Swahili chief Nahimba, now falls outside the Kazembe's kingdom.

TRIBAL MIXTURE

166 619 As a result of piecemeal settlement and frequent inter-marriage the component tribal groups are as a rule distributed over the whole territory. Local concentrations occur nevertheless: the Shila and Tabwa predominate in the extreme north, the Lungu in the Mulele district, the Chishinga in the Mununshi valley. A Bemba colony occupies land between Lake Mofwe and Lake Mweru granted to Mwansamukupa in return for the assistance given by his brother Mwamba, a Bemba chief, in opposing the invading Bayeke and re-establishing the fugitive Kazembe. On Kilwa island the descendants of Swahili slavers and Nyamwezi copper traders live alongside the aboriginal Shila.

The bulk of the population is made up of the Shila, Lunda, Chishinga, 174 dates from this period, since the composition of the invading group still determines the title to chieftainships, rank, succession to various offices, and the order of precedence of a number of the older clans.

The Bemba are to all intents and purposes a homogeneous group. They form a quite distinct political unit from the Bisa, Lala, Lunda, and other neighbouring tribes with similar traditions of origin and marked cultural and linguistic affinities. The Bemba declare that their forefathers found the country empty on their arrival, and, whether this is true or not, there seems to have been no strong opposition from whatever groups occupied the territory. The war-like habits of this tribe seem to have developed later, when they spread into the surrounding districts, pushing back their neighbours, such as the Lungu to the north-west, the Bisa and the Lala to the west and south respectively, and the Cewa to the east. The dominance of the Bemba chiefs was still more effectively enforced by the import of Arab guns in the nineteenth century. Where they did not dislodge the occupants of the surrounding country, their chiefs appointed members of the royal family or specially faithful subjects to hold the district for him (*ukulashika*) and to collect tribute of ivory tusks, grain, ironwork, salt, or other goods. The empire of the Bemba extended at one time right up into the Congo and to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, and they exerted influence over most of the present Bisa and Lala country to the south. With the coming of the white man at the end of the nineteenth century, their authority over the surrounding tribes collapsed, and though Bemba chiefs still rule over Bisa villages, e.g. in the Chinsali and Luwingu districts, it is rather a case of tribal admixture on the borders than a large-scale incorporation of foreign elements such as has occurred in the history of some of the Southern Bantu states. For the purposes of the present inquiry, we can reckon the Bemba as a homogeneous tribe with a history of settled occupation of their present territory lasting about 200 years.

101 [186] The distinctive marks of tribal membership are the following: (*a*) The common name *Babemba*, still uttered with a good deal of pride in such phrases as '*Fwe Babemba*' ('We, the Bemba'), used to preface bragging references to the exploits of the tribe as compared to those of surrounding peoples, who are still sometimes referred to contemptuously as slaves (*bashya*). (*b*) The common

(b) The common
language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, 101
although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring [197]
Cibisa or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each
temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common [304]
historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present
day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, [186]
and take delight in describing the military exploits of their
ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to
a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of [643]
the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal 611
tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through
the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives [591]
composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and
sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own
brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines
his succession to different offices and his status in the community,
although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his
residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan 614
(*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line.
Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or
natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin
usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the
original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting.
Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a [582]
woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms
are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal
side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank
—if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain
offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and
claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to 614
whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of 554
the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as
a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena
ŋandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands
highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish
clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The
hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the [616]
imikoa are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual

614 to three hundred years ago. Membership of a mukoa determines a man's legal affiliation, his descent, and his succession to the name and status of dead relatives, or to particular offices, ritual or political. It gives him certain rights to hospitality and support.

614 186 195 The distinguishing mark of clan membership is the use of the mukoa name. A man describes himself as a mwina (plural *bena*) or a member of such and such a clan (*e.g.*, mwina nkalamo, a member of the lion clan).[5] Besides its title the clan possesses its own 'praise-names,' to give the English term used for such honorific terms of address as the *Sibongo* of the Southern Bantu. These praise-names are phrases making reference, usually in boastful language, to the names of the first, or most famous ancestors of the clan, or mentioning an incident in its early history, or the attributes considered to belong to its members. Such sentences are used in [537] greetings, in jokes between members of different clans, or in public declamations before a mukoa head on some ceremonial occasion, usually at the court of the Paramount chief. The mukoa

---

[5] The same word mwina is used to describe the subject of a chief, the inhabitant of a district, or the consort of a man or woman. In the western part of the district and in the Katanga area of the Belgian Congo, *Bena* is used to preface tribal names as distinct from clan names, *e.g.*, *Bena Cishinga* in the Bangweulu district, or the *Bena Kalundwe* in the Katanga area, *cf.* E. Verhulpen, *Baluba et Balubaïsés*, 1936.

[p. 188(c)]

614 praise-names are very similar to those shouted in honour of a chief on formal occasions or used
●186 as titles of address to him, and these phrases,
195 preserved exactly in traditional form, and often expressed in archaic language, appear to be characteristic of Bantu chieftainship and clan system. Malinowski has shown in a typical Melanesian society how the myths of a clan origin, 'owned' and recounted by its members, form a recognized charter for the exercise of legal privileges such as rights of occupation of land or ritual prerogatives, and it is quite
[773] probable that among Bantu, where myths, in the sense of tales of the miraculous doings of clan heroes are rare, yet the recitation of the names of clan or chiefly ancestors, the repetition of stories of their lives, or the shouting of a key sentence or proverb from such tales may fulfil very similar sociological functions.

614 It is the name of the Bemba *mukoa* and the story of its acquisition by a special lineage group
[616] that provides the basis for the pairing of opposite clans, or *bunungwe*. The clan names are those of a variety of objects, animal, plants, meteorological phenomena such as rain, parts of the human body, and even cultural activities such as funeral lamentations. The most common are
[192] the following :—crocodile (*ngandu** or *ngwena*—the royal clan), fish (*sabi*, or in the Bisa country *tembo*), lion (*nkalamo*), leopard (*ngo**), otter (*mbao*), rat (*mpuku*), frog (*lue*), bees (*kashima*), elephant (*nsofu*), wild pig (*ngulube* or *Cabala** or *nama*), tortoise (*Nkumbo*), goat (*mbushi*), dog (*mbwa*), honey-bird (*nguni*): millet (*lusa**), porridge (*bwali*), mushroom (3 clans—*boa*, the ordinary word for mushroom, *musaman*, a special type of mushroom, and *ngona*, the Bisa mushroom clan), grass (*kani*, diminutive of *cani*), gourd (*lende*), castor-oil seed (*mono*), wild loquat (*musuku** or *Cilufya*), tree or drum clan (*ngoma* or *muti* in Bisa country), beans (*nkunda**): iron (*mbulo*), rain (*mfula*), anthill (*culu*), male genitals (*nsende*), female genitals (*nkashi*), lamentations (*ndoshi**
614 or *misoa*), pot (*inongo*). It is interesting to note that some of the names are words no longer in
171 common use, *i.e.*, those marked with an asterisk, and that the majority of these titles are found widely spread among those Rhodesian tribes which claim an origin from the Luba-speaking peoples in the Congo, such as the Kaonde, Bisa, Ushi, Unga, etc. This is especially true of the